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Although all media is inherently multimodal, some in academia perceive the growing sentiment to integrate it with intentionality at the forefront of a text as threatening to the hegemony of language or frivolous compared to traditional composition. For centuries, the linguistic mode has sat atop all other semiotic modes on account of perceived advantages– its permanence over the ephemeral gestural mode, capacity to be succinct and direct in ways the aural or visual mode may be less effective at, and present at the forefront of perception unlike the spatial mode. However, the place of the linguistic mode particularly in its written form in culture at large acts as an accent to other modes in media in the modern era. Both sources give commentary on how this disparity arises as well as possible solutions to bridge that gap. Sullivan and Gagich address how the difficulties of a rapidly evolving world manifest in one niche of education that has lingering external impact, the world which requires this progression if academia should maintain relevance, and the advantages of multimodality in serving a wider, more complex audience than what academia or culture have ever recognized the need to serve before.

When discussing the pedagogy of multimodal media, two main concerns arise: how it is created and the standards with which to assess it. The standards of rhetoric have been long cemented in composition and academia as a whole, owing their origin to the Golden Age of Athens. This is not unexpected given how institutions of education and institutions that sprout

from education and rely on "the educated" to perform such as law have always been devoted to the Classics and the ethos that lends them. Therefore, resistance to the supposedly perfected rhetorical principles and their linguistic-first approach could be seen as potentially undermining the authority of traditional composition and the institutions that share its origin. However, as Sullivan writes on the multitude of approaches to multimodal media, she cites theories that blend these traditional standards with innovation in composition like Cynthia Selfe's. Selfe does not challenge these standards, instead opting to repurpose these principles (Sullivan 150-151). Indeed, multimodal media does possess concerns for purpose, audience, tone, etc. and can easily be observed in most pieces of media. This is especially apparent in media not in academia, but in culture; advertisements are a prime example of this with their deeply calculated techniques to appeal to a specific niche, often using all modes with equal emphasis. Sullivan refers to others such as Jeff Rice or Geoffrey Sirc who would prefer to overturn outdated notions in favor of avant-garde standards. Whilst their desire for stronger means of expression that the linguistic mode cannot provide alone has merit, it lacks consideration for the complexities of teaching and the receptibility of students during an academic slump in the United States. These familiar rhetorical principles build upon what students already know. Reinventing their framework with abstract ideas like chora, nonlinearity, and commutation (Sullivan 153) would likely frustrate students and deter them from considering the full potential of multimodal texts. This would worsen the battle educators already face with disengaged students who increasingly seek shortcuts with tools like generative AI. Aligned with Selfe is Melanie Gagich. Gagich states that creating multimodal media "parallels the traditional writing process" (Gagich 72) and therefore leans on those same rhetorical principles, exactly as Selfe proposed. Gagich's many examples of multimodal media exemplifies an acute awareness for audience, tone, and even pathos and ethos.

Together, their shared philosophy emphasizes how familiar multimodal media is to traditional, linguistics-forward composition in its standards.

Why is there a desire to change the academic golden child of the linguistic-focused essay to embrace a wider range of texts at all? The answer to the question can be summed up with one post to nearly any social media platform. There, the linguistic mode is in the caption, the visual mode dominates with captivating imagery, the aural mode sets the tone, the gestural mode is portrayed through the visual as the creator of the piece emphasizes words with wild or muted expressions and hand gesticulating, and the spatial mode is present in the caption, the video, or the carousel of images. In a post-internet, post-9/11 twenty-four-seven constantly-updating-feed world, the linguistic mode alone does not present itself as flashy or rapid compared to other modes. Sullivan and Gagich both reference the champion of culture– multimodal media– and its suspicious absence in academia in spite of that fact. Selfe describes its presence in culture at large as being used "almost exclusively" (Sullivan 226) and this has only become more factual since her claim in 2007. The dominance of multimodal media is only further pushed by algorithms that seek to keep users engaged for monetary benefit and advertising opportunities; with the rise of video sharing and later shortform content, content that is visuals first and linguistics second (especially in the written form) has formed a strong connection with audiences globally thanks to its easier consumption. Gagich acknowledges this by pointing out that teaching multimodal media creation endows students with a transferable job skill and that, in essence, teaching should be focused on enriching students for pursuits beyond the classroom (Gagich 73). Furthermore, as Sullivan quoted of Rice, there is a depth of expression that the linguistic mode fails to capture singularly. Even simply embellishing a language-dominated text with images of an event as a news publication may do or manipulating the word placement to

create shapes and images greatly modifies the impact of the text. Therefore, the pedagogy should reflect this evolution as multimodal media domination ceaselessly strides forwards in the culture at large.

Beyond multimodal media's place in pedagogy or culture, there is a tertiary concern which it both affects and is affected by: accessibility. In discussing how multimodal media may be more effective at providing a full breadth of expression, the capacity of the audience to receive that must be considered. Arguably, its diverse presentation may lend itself better to communicate to various groups or allow them to produce more impactful media. Accessibility extends beyond the physical, including financial situations and education backgrounds. As a part of Gagich's breakdown on the creation of multimodal media, she mentions copyright-free media as a sort of gold mine; this helps even the playing field as the visual and aural modes often come at a cost when used in media. Even if someone attempted to avoid using pre-existing materials, the tools and programs to create media highlighting those modes can be expensive, so Gagich's recommendation is realistic and accommodating. Modes may also balance each other out, compensating for where one may not successfully reach the audience; for instance, an image with a caption or alt text accommodates those who cannot afford the technology to support such file types or those with visual impairments. Part of the excerpts of Selfe in Sullivan's work focus on her challenging what she calls "alphabetic media" (Sullivan 150)– what can be thought of as the written linguistic mode– which inherently has undertones of accessibility. This type of media often possesses an air of elitism that does not contribute to the quality of the message nor its availability to a realistic audience composed of complex people. Media that relies solely on language chances excluding numerous groups: those with dyslexia, those from underprivileged educational backgrounds, non-native speakers of a text, et cetera. Additionally, expanding

composition in academia to include multimodal media as a valid form of expression expands opportunities for those who simply thrive better in other formats. Much of the earliest evidence of human expression is left as a visual remnant on a sherd or a cave wall and is much beloved by highbrow scholars and researchers– to imply that humans no longer have worthwhile commentary through other modes belittles this history and its continued tradition. Therefore, multimodal media is more accessible than the strictly linguistics-lead texts for its flexibility, expanding participation and consumption of communicated ideas.

In conclusion, multimodality in academics is the future and Gagich, Sullivan, and Sullivan's reference points lay out how it could manifest both internally and externally in education. Multimodality enriches media and can add to linguistically-driven works, not devaluing the message as some believe. It is observable in the world as the prime way to communicate an idea widely, quickly, and effectively in ways that alphabetic print media are faltering to do. Furthermore, in reaching that larger audience, multimodal media can be more accessible than primarily linguistic texts, widening the opportunity for who may or may not engage, especially for groups often disregarded and uninvited from academic or cultural conversations.

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